

RESOLUTION

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR THE
EAU CLAIRE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Eau Claire City Council has approved a multi-year project to update the Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan to be in conformance with the Wisconsin Smart Growth statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Smart Growth statutes require that a public participation plan be approved by the City Council at the start of the comprehensive planning process, and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Eau Claire City Council that the public participation process for the Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan provide reasonable opportunities for effective citizen input and involvement throughout the planning process; and

WHEREAS, the Eau Claire Plan Commission has reviewed the attached public participation plan and recommended its approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Eau Claire that the attached public participation plan is approved, subject to the following change recommended by the Plan Commission:

1. The Citizens' Advisory Committee described in the Public Participation Plan shall be selected by the Plan Commission, and approved by the City Council.

Adopted,

August 12, 2003

Motion to adopt the resolution.

Offered by

Toby Biegel

Seconded by

Raymond K. Hughes

Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This document describes a proposed program of public participation strategies and techniques to be used during preparation of a revised *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan* and includes these sections:

- Summary of the Work Program and the Project Schedule
- General Approach to Public Participation and Communication
- Specific Participation Program Elements

A. Summary Of Work Program and Project Schedule

This section describes the major tasks to be completed in preparing the Comprehensive Plan and outlines the key participation strategies that will be implemented during each stage of the planning process.

The planning process consists of three distinct planning stages:

1. Understanding the issues and questions that should be discussed, debated and resolved.
2. Preparing two or more broad alternative courses of action that reflect the clusters of issues identified and selecting an alternative for preparing a conceptual plan.
3. Preparing more detailed plans for land use, transportation, parks, utilities, and the other remaining plan elements.

These stages correspond to three major planning tasks. For each task, specific participation strategies will be implemented to communicate with the public about the planning process and to encourage public participation. The chart on pg. 3 identifies the approximate timeline for each of the three tasks, as well as the project schedule for the participation strategies to be implemented during the course of the project. The three major tasks include:

Task 1.0 – Preparing an Analysis of Conditions and Issues

- Base Maps
- Demographic Trends Analysis (*City leads*)
- Existing Land Use and Growth Management Analysis
- Natural Resource Analysis
- Transportation System Analysis
- Parks, Greenways and Open Space Analysis
- Community Physical Character and Development Analysis
- Public Utilities System Analysis
- Community Facilities Analysis (*City leads*)
- Housing Analysis
- Historic Resources Analysis (*City leads*)
- Economic Environment Analysis

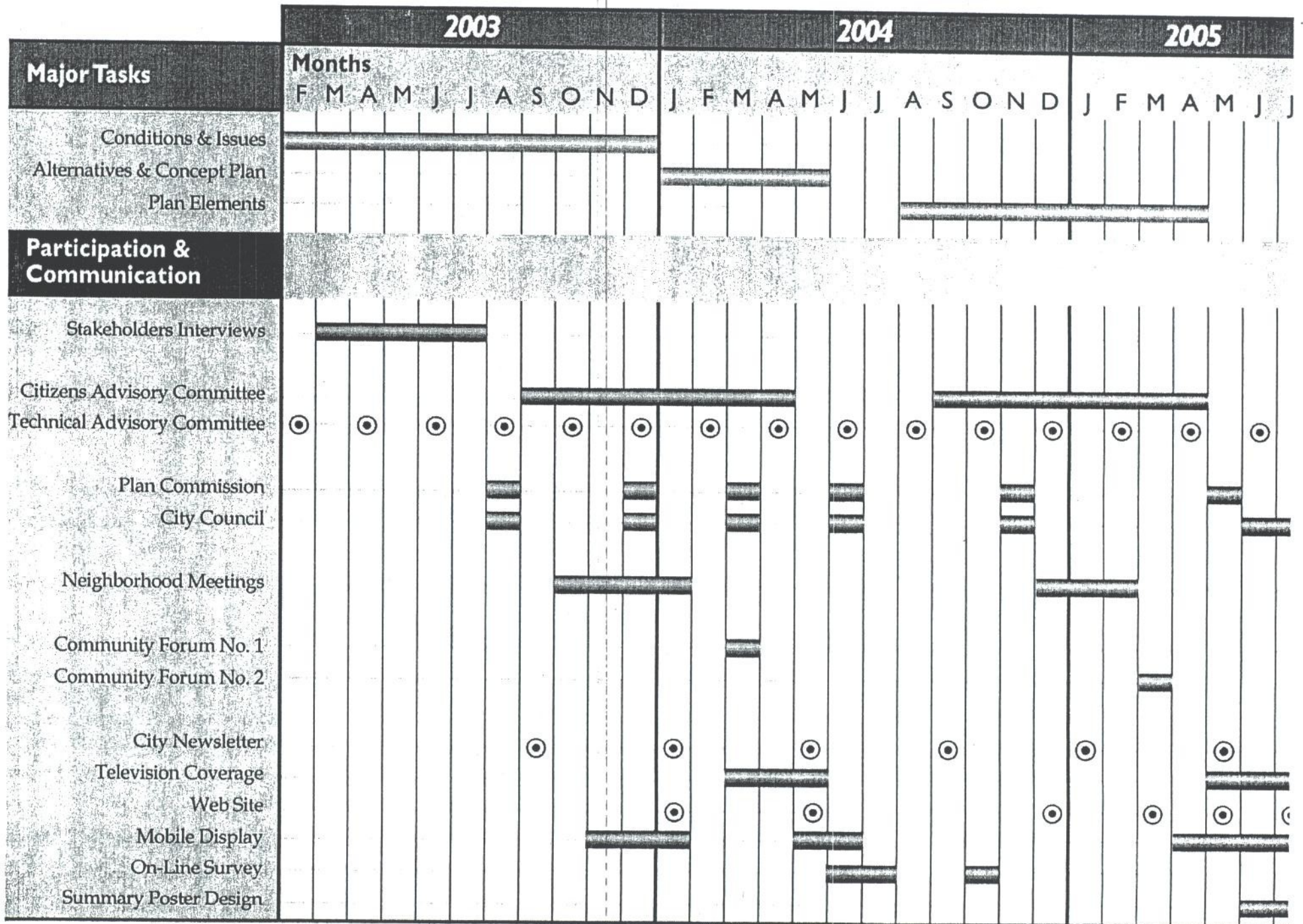
- Downtown Analysis
- Intergovernmental Coordination Analysis (*City leads*)
- Compile a draft Analysis of Conditions and Issues Report

Task 2.0 – Prepare a Conceptual Plan

- Prepare and Evaluate Generalized Alternatives
- Select Concept Plan

Task 3.0 – Prepare Detailed Plan Elements

- Introduction and Summary
- Land Use and Growth Management Plan
- Natural Resources Plan
- Transportation Plan
- Parks, Open Space and Greenways Plan
- Community Physical Character and Development Plan
- Public Utilities Systems Plan
- Community Facilities Plan (*City leads*)
- Housing Plan
- Historic Preservation Plan (*City leads*)
- Economic Development Plan
- Downtown Plan
- Intergovernmental Coordination and Cooperation (*City leads*)
- Implementation and Capital Improvements Program Guidelines
- Plan Monitoring and Evaluation
- Document Refinement and Production



B. General Approach To Public Participation And Communication

This section describes the rationale underlying the communication and participation strategy that should be conducted for a comprehensive plan. The specifics of the resulting program are described in Section C.

The Challenge of Public Outreach

Effective public communication and participation will be key to resolving the difficult issues and creating an acceptable plan for Eau Claire. A successful communication and consensus-building program must encourage participation at all levels, ensure that unique issues are addressed, convey an understanding of difficult issues, and build consensus among participants. The resulting plan will then be based on analysis that is clearly understood and decisions will tend to be more acceptable to a wider range of interests, and be practical and implementable.

Public participation is a strategic art. A successful process for building either consensus or informed consent should be based on an overall strategy for moving toward that goal. While a schedule of meetings, workshops and newsletters may be adopted at the outset, the process and its leaders should be sufficiently flexible to respond to changing circumstances, opportunities and problems. The project managers need to judge when to use various techniques, call group meetings, and conduct additional briefings or employ whatever technique is most suited to the situation.

It is important to engage the community's residents, business and civic leaders in discussion about where the City is going, what alternatives the City should consider, and ways of addressing recurring issues. A comprehensive planning process offers an excellent opportunity for a community to reflect on what has gone before and to consider what may lie ahead.

However, in an era in which busy families hardly have time for a meal together, getting the comprehensive plan project on people's "radar screens" requires a well planned approach. These questions should be considered:

- Who must be engaged in order for the plan to work?
- Who should be involved if the plan is to enjoy a broad climate of support?
- How should outreach and listening activities incorporate community insights into the policy and technical work?
- What type of participation is appropriate at each stage of a multi-year project?
- How can a city accomplish effective public engagement with limited staff and budget?
- How can the interest by the Advisory Committee and participants be sustained over the 30 months of the project?

The public outreach and engagement strategy needs to address these and other issues effectively, and to be woven throughout the overall comprehensive planning effort.

Guidelines for Public Participation

1. Facilitate and Educate

Throughout the process, the planning consultant and City planning staff will act as facilitators and advisors about the benefits of sound planning practices and growth strategies. Key participants will be members of the public, the City Council and Plan Commission, the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), other City boards and commissions, and the City staff. These initial facilitation efforts will help participants understand the reasoning behind specific recommendations and provide a common level of knowledge from which discussions can take place. The topics that will be discussed include fiscal health, the benefits of density, design guidelines, sidewalks and street trees, traffic calming, system planning, access control, corridor preservation, landscaping and mixed-use development.

2. Reach out to All Segments, Including Potential Objectors

To gain acceptance and lasting support for the Comprehensive Plan, it will be essential to reach out to all segments of the affected public and involve them in meaningful ways. In particular, potential objectors must be involved from the outset and have reasonable opportunities for their views to be expressed during the discussion process.

3. Build Support

The City staff and consultant will employ a variety of techniques through the process to build support. The result should be informed consent, which is not necessarily the same as consensus. Informed consent means that the broad segments of the community have had ample opportunities to learn about and shape the plan.

4. Provide Opportunities for Both Active and Passive Participation

Participation in the planning process may be active, passive, or both, depending on the inclination of each citizen and the stage in the process. Examples of active and passive participation are listed below.

Active Participation:

- Serve on Advisory Committee
- Participate in meetings
- Comment on draft elements
- Speak to Advisory Committee members
- Write opinion letters
- Testify at public hearings
- Attend project open house

Passive Participation:

- Read city newsletters
- Read newspaper articles about plan
- Watch cable TV programs about plan
- Review draft elements
- Complete an opinion survey (on-line Web survey)
- Visit the project Web site

Participation strategies need to be developed for both the active and less-active general public. The active public includes those who tend to be actively engaged in the

community, and participate in civic organizations, civic clubs, business groups and other organized interests. Outreach activities should include interactive workshops, focus groups and briefings. It is useful to use a “go to where they are” approach to be effective: getting community organizations to sponsor a workshop for their members, for instance. City staff could conduct many of these meetings.

In the absence of controversy, it is sometimes hard for planning efforts to break through and get the less-active general public’s attention. Yet, implementation of plans and policies takes place in a public climate where the political mood will make the difference. Key to getting planning issues before the less active general public will be a thoughtful communication strategy that effectively uses communication media of all kinds, including television, radio, newspapers, Web sites and Web surveys.

Participation Techniques

The Eau Claire comprehensive planning process should incorporate the following participation programs and techniques:

- **Visioning and issue identification workshop**
Conduct an exercise with the Advisory Committee to identify issues and envision Eau Claire’s future. Use nominal group and dot voting techniques to elicit ideas in a way that everyone feels free to express themselves without criticism. The result should be a clear and concise description of major issues, to inform citizens and decision-makers and ensure that the plan addresses the problems.
- **Explore alternatives**
Propose and discuss alternatives with primary stakeholders that respond to the major issues. Using alternatives invites comments from all perspectives and encourages debate of possible solutions.
- **Small-group discussions and presentations**
Whenever there is a large-group meeting, it is highly useful to break out into smaller groups so that individuals can converse, state their views and have them recorded.
- **Open-house presentations**
A great way to inform people about the plan in a relaxed atmosphere is to put the analysis or draft plan maps on the wall in a large room and invite the public in to ask questions of the staff and consultants. These could be followed by a formal presentation using slides.
- **A periodic project newsletter**
Describe the plan and the process in the City’s quarterly newsletter.
- **Local newspaper coverage**
The planning consultant and City staff will meet with the editor of the Eau Claire *Leader-Telegram* to establish a working relationship and then provide the assigned reporter with draft text and maps, and interviews. The local newspaper can be the single best way to communicate to the general public about the plan. (The Green Bay *Press-Gazette* won awards from the state and national APA for its coverage of that plan.)

- **The local cable television channel**
The local public access cable television channel could air the major public meetings and/or discussions about the plan.
- **Project web site**
Establish a page in Eau Claire's Web site for announcements about the planning process, summaries of meetings, draft reports, graphics, names and telephone numbers, and comments e-mailed in from members of the public. Post interim reports and maps, the full draft plan and the final plan on the Web site. The Web site could also provide opportunities for on-line public surveys.

Key Participation Roles

The consultant will implement the Public Participation Plan primarily through coordination with the City Council, Plan Commission, Citizens Advisory Committee and City staff.

The roles of each group involved in this planning are summarized as follows:

- **City Council**
The City Council is authorized by state law to adopt the Comprehensive Plan by ordinance with a majority of the Council. There will be regular meetings with the City Council during the planning process to keep the Council updated on the progress of the project, to provide opportunities for additional public comment, and to ensure that the project is moving in the right direction. At least one member of the City Council should be on the Citizen Advisory Committee.
- **Plan Commission**
The Plan Commission is authorized by state law to prepare the Comprehensive Plan and to recommend (by a majority vote of the commission) its adoption to the City Council. As with the Council, there will be regular public meetings with the Plan Commission during the planning process to ensure that the project is moving in the right direction. The Plan Commission will have on its agenda a discussion item for the Comprehensive Plan during the entire planning process to allow planning staff and the commission members to exchange information on the progress of the project. Members of the Plan Commission will be encouraged to be on the Citizen's Advisory Committee.
- **Citizens Advisory Committee**
This group will be appointed by the City Council for the purpose of *advising* the Advisory Committee consultant and City staff on the preparation, discussion, and review of the comprehensive plan. The Advisory Committee will send to the Plan Commission a draft comprehensive plan. Members may include persons from the Plan Commission and City Council.

The planning team needs an Advisory Committee that remains together throughout the process, participates in key explorations and learns from them, and is able to offer informed feedback representative of the diverse interests of the community. The Committee should also function as a liaison to the community and to interested stakeholder groups and organizations.

Early in the planning process, the planning consultant will conduct interviews and focus group discussions to enable them to advise the City on the composition and size of this group, its roles and operating procedures, and the frequency of its meetings. The Citizen's Advisory Committee's contribution can be significant if their time is used well through teamwork between the City staff and consultant.

Meetings would be held with the Citizen's Advisory Committee at approximately monthly intervals from September 2003 through May 2004 then from September 2004 through approximately February 2005. The City would advertise these meetings and the public would be encouraged to attend.

The planning consultant and the City staff would spend the first six months identifying and analyzing conditions and issues so that when the Citizen's Advisory Committee begins meeting in September, 2003, they will receive complete drafts of each subject before each meeting.

Committee meetings would be conducted efficiently to respect people's time, and there would be plenty of time allotted to discuss issues, analysis and policies, and to obtain the Committee's input.

The meetings should be held in a comfortable room with good conditions for presentations. Refreshments should always be served, and some time should be spent on socialization so that people feel comfortable discussing topics in a group setting.

The planning consultant will advise the City as to what segments of the population the Committee should attempt to represent and how big it should be (no larger than 30 people).

- **City Staff**

The City staff will conduct neighborhood meetings as needed to address geographically specific issues.

The City staff, especially the Director of Community Development, the City Planner and the Director of Public Works, will be involved in all phases of the planning process. Communication would occur almost daily on all facets of the plan development. Information would first be communicated through City staff, then through technical and other groups.

The City staff should facilitate or conduct some of the public participation and communication meetings such as presentations to neighborhood and civic

groups outside the scheduled committee meetings. The planning consultant will provide a series of PowerPoint presentations and printed maps that the staff could use for this purpose.

The City staff will also take the lead on preparing Demographic Trends, Community Facilities, Historic Resources, and Intergovernmental Coordination. The planning consultant would provide an outline, examples from other plans and reviews of the City's drafts.

C. Participation Program Elements

The following public participation elements are suggested in a preliminary fashion and could be revised based on what is learned during the diagnostic interviews.

Participation Strategies for Tasks 1 and 2

- **Meetings with the Plan Commission and City Council**
Help the City staff brief the members of the Plan Commission and City Council on the work program and the progress of the project, and solicit their ideas about issues, needs and opportunities. Meet with these groups near the beginning of the process and before the completion of Task 2.0-Prepare Conceptual Plan. The consultant's trips to Eau Claire will be coordinated with these meetings.
- **Individual Interviews**
Conduct individual meetings with key persons from across the community. Those interviewed may include members of the Common Council, Plan Commission, Parks Commission, business organizations, neighborhood organizations, civic boosters, local activists, land developers and builders. These should be conducted sequentially at City Hall. The City will be responsible for scheduling the times with the participants at thirty-minute intervals. .
- **Meetings with the Citizen Advisory Committee**
It is proposed that the City enlist members for the Citizens Advisory Committee from the numerous committees and commissions that presently exist and others as needed in Eau Claire. The advisory Committee would provide input and reaction to the work of the staff and consultants throughout the planning process.
- **Citizen Advisory Committee Meetings 1 through 6: Review the Analysis of Conditions and Issues**
The first meeting with the Advisory Committee should occur in September 2003. At this meeting the consultant will distribute the draft *Analysis of Conditions and Issues Report* in advance and review it with the Committee. Provide large prints of the maps. Review two or more planning subjects at each meeting. Present a short PowerPoint summary of each subject then engage the Committee in discussion, leaving plenty of time for the Committee to voice their ideas.

At the initial meeting, use the nominal group process to work with the Citizens Advisory Committee to refine, amend and expand the issues previously identified by the consultant and City staff. Ideas would be recorded on cards and displayed on the wall. Participants would be asked to suggest ways to cluster the cards by commonality. Then they would be asked to suggest “root” ideas. Staff would save the cards by cluster for transcribing.

Also, single-use cameras would be distributed with which the committee members could take photos of positive and negative features of the city, which will be displayed and discussed at the Urban Design issues meeting of the Citizen Advisory Committee.

- **Meetings 7, 8 and 9: Review and Refine the Conceptual Alternatives**

Meet with the Citizen Advisory Committee to review and discuss the Conceptual Alternatives. Work with the committee to identify the elements of each alternative that are most desirable. Create a single hybrid alternative (the Concept Plan) that best begins to resolve the major issues. . Describe the Concept Plan with text, matrix and a map.

- **Neighborhood and other Interest Group Meetings**

Help the City staff conduct neighborhood and other small group meetings by providing a PowerPoint show that summarizes the *Analysis of Conditions and Issues Report*. It is anticipated the City staff will conduct two rounds of meetings with these interest groups to discuss the *Analysis of Conditions and Issues Report* and later to discuss the alternatives and concept plan.

- **Community Forum #1: Analysis, Issues, Alternatives and Concept Plan**

Community Forum #1 should be held on a Saturday morning in a large meeting room. This event might include:

- Large maps of all the analysis materials on the walls with “docents” to explain and answer questions
- Results of the community opinion Web-based survey
- Continuously running slide show about Eau Claire
- A slide show and visual preference survey
- The conceptual alternatives
- The Concept Plan
- A two-projector slide show and presentation explaining the analysis of conditions, the alternatives and the draft Concept Plan
- Comment cards for citizens to record their thoughts
- Fun events for children – draw a future Eau Claire
- Pastries, coffee and juice
- Elected and appointed officials and senior staff available to hear comments

- **Newsletter**

Prepare text and graphics for inclusion in the City’s quarterly newsletter. This material would summarize the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, the process and schedule and the outcomes of Task 1. Other newsletters should be prepared for Task 2.

- **Television Coverage and Radio Call-In Shows**

Record a discussion between the consultant's project manager and the City Planner about the analysis of conditions and the visioning process. This could be broadcast many times to the community.

The City will seek to gain coverage from the local cable TV provider and the local broadcast stations of any and all of the meetings and public events associated with this plan.

- **Monthly Reports**
Prepare text and graphics for inclusion in the City's web-based monthly reports to the community.
- **Web Site**
Provide written and graphic materials describing the project for the City to use on a page in its Web site.
- **Mobile Display**
The large presentation maps prepared for Community Forum #1 could be displayed in the City Hall, the library, the convention center and other major civic buildings.

Participation Strategies for Task 3 – Plan Elements

- **Meetings with the Plan Commission and City Council**
Help the City staff brief the members of the Plan Commission and City Council the progress of the project, and solicit their comments. Participate in one public hearing with the Plan Commission and one with the City Council.

Our trips to Eau Claire should be coordinated with these meetings if possible.
- **Meetings with the Citizen Advisory Committee**
Meet up to eight times with the Citizen Advisory Committee to review draft plan elements. Any additional meetings could be led by City staff without the presence of the consultant.
- **Neighborhood Meetings**
Provide a PowerPoint show with which the City staff could conduct one or two rounds of meetings with each of the planning interest groups. These meetings would be conducted in the same manner as the first round of meetings for Task 1.0 and 2.0.
- **Community Forum #2**
Facilitate Community Forum #2 to present and explain the draft plan and receive comments.
- **Monthly Reports**
Prepare text and graphics for inclusion in the City's web-based monthly reports to the community and in other portions of the City's Web pages pertaining to the plan.
- **Television Coverage and Radio Call-In Shows**
Participate in taping an informal program about the draft plan. Participate in a radio call-in program if the timing fits our schedule of meetings in Eau Claire.
- **Newspaper Coverage**

Continue to nurture the working relationship with editors and reporters from the *Leader Telegram* to obtain regular and favorable news and editorial coverage.

- **Web Site**

Provide written and graphic materials describing the projects progress for the City to use on a page in its web site.

- **Summary Poster Design**

Write and design the artwork for a two-sided poster (approximately 22" x 34" in size) that summarizes the plan. Prepare a digital layout in a format that can be used by a printer.

The consultant will contract with a printer and the consultant's graphic designer will communicate with the printer regarding the technical details. Responsibility for the quality of the printing will rest with the printing company.

The consultant will provide printing specifications, including specifying the paper stock. A City representative must sign his or her approval of the final artwork prior to consultant sending the file to the printer.

The consultant's graphic designer will inspect and approve or disapprove the first copies off the press.